

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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R 270431Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

TO SECSTATE WAHDC 4091

INFO DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, MY, TH

SUBJECT: MALAYSIA AND THAI PRIME MINISTERS CONCLUDE MEETINGS: UPGRADED

GENERAL BORDER AGREEMENT EXPECTED IN ABOUT A MONTH

REF: KUALA LUMPUR 4256

1. SUMMARY. THAI AND MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTERS HELD TWO DAYS OF DISCUSSIONS IN PENANG JULY 24-25 FOCUSING ON BORDER SECURITY MATTERS. PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN, WHILE NOTING "NOTHING SENSATION" HAD RESULTED, CHARACTERIZED TALKS AS "VERY USEFUL AND FRANK" AND "A BIG STEP FORWARD" IN RELATIONS. BOTH LEADERS CONCURRED NEW AGREEMENT SHOULD BE BROADENED TO ENCOMPASS MATTERS SUCH AS SMUGGLING AND IMMIGRATION. PRIME MINISTER SENI INDICATED A "HOT PURSUIT" CLAUSE MIGHT BE RETAINED

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IN THE NEW ACCORD, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN LIMITATIONS. MALAYSIA

WILL OFFICIALLY SUBMIT ITS DETAILED COUNTER PROPOSALS TO THAI DRAFT IN A WEEK, AND FINAL PACT, ACCORDING TO SENI, WOULD BE SIGNED "PROBABLY WITHIN A MONTH." END SUMMARY.

2. MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER DATUK HUSSEIN ONN HOSTED HIS THAI COUNTERPART, SENI PROMOT, TO A SERIES OF MEETINGS HELD ON PENANG JULY 24 AND 25, TO GET ACQUAINTED AND REVIEW ISSUES OF MUTUAL CONCERN, ESPECIALLY SECURITY COOPERATION ALONG THEIR JOINT BORDER. THE TWO MET FOR TWO HOURS IN "PRIVATE" JULY 24 WITH ONLY THEIR MINISTERIAL LEVEL SUBORDINATES PRESENT AND ON JULY 25 HAD A ONE AND A HALF HOUR SESSION WITH THEIR FULL DELEGATIONS PRESENT. ON JULY 24 HUSSEIN ONN HOSTED OFFICIAL DINNER FOR SENI AND ON JULY 25 THE TWO MET FOR BREAKFAST AND A ROUND OF GOLF.

3. IN HIS REMARKS AT THE OFFICIAL DINNER DATUK HUSSEIN SAID THAT HE AND SENI WERE "STILL SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS" TO THEIR COMMON PROBLEMS. HE DESCRIBED FIRST DAY'S SESSION AS "VERY USEFUL AND FRANK" AND SAID THE DISCUSSIONS HAD CONTRIBUTED TO EACH SIDE'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE OTHER'S "PROBLEMS, DOUBTS AND FEARS." HE STRESSED THE SOLID FOUNDATIONS OF RELATIONS BETWEEN MALAYSIA AND THAILAND AND HOPED THAT ADDITIONAL MEETINGS, INCLUDING A RECIPROCAL VISIT BY HIM TO THAILAND SOMETIME IN THE NEAR FUTURE, WOULD FURTHER STRENGTHEN TIES SO THAT "NO POWER WILL BE ABLE TO DRIVE A WEDGE BETWEEN US." SENI WAS SIMILARLY UPBEAT IN HIS REPLY AND CITED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TWO NATIONS "JOINING IN COMMON CAUSE FOR OUR COMMON GAIN."

4. FOLLOWING THE TALKS, PRIME MINISTERS HUSSEIN AND SENI HELD SEPARATE PRESS CONFERENCES. EACH SAID THAT THE NEW GENERAL BORDER AGREEMENT (GBA) WOULD BE "UPGRADED" TO ENCOMPASS A BROADER RANGE OF SUBJECTS NOT NECESSARILY RELATING TO SECURITY SUCH AS SMUGGLING AND IMMIGRATION. HUSSEIN DESCRIBED THE TALKS AS "NOTHING SENSATIONAL" BUT NEVERTHELESS "A BIG STEP FORWARD." PEOPLE SHOULD NOT EXPECT MIRACLES FROM THIS MEETING. HE NOTED, ADDING THAT "WHAT IS ENCOURAGING IS THAT WE ARE MEETING IN A SPIRIT OF FRIENDLINESS AND DETERMINATION TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO OUR PROBLEMS." HE STATED THAT MALAYSIA HAD MADE SOME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COUNTER-PROPOSALS TO THE DRAFT AGREEMENT WHICH WOULD BE TRANSMITTED TO THE THAIS SHORTLY (SOME PRESS REPORTS SAID THE GOM'S DETAILED PROPOSALS WOULD BE SENT WITHIN A WEEK). DATUK HUSSEIN ALSO SAID THAT "MACHINERY" HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED TO LOOK INTO DETAILS OF THE AGREEMENT AND MAKE THEM WORKABLE; "WE HOPE THE NEW AGREEMENT WILL BE MORE EFFECTIVE (THAN THE PREVIOUS ONE), "HE STATED.

5. PRIME MINISTER SENI TOLD NEWSMEN THAT "BOTH PARTIES HAVE AGREED THAT THE SIGNING OF THE NEW AGREEMENT SHOULD TAKE PLACE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, PROBABLY WITHIN A MONTH." HE SAID THAT THE NEW AGREEMENT AS PROPOSED BY THE RTG INCORPORATES "ABOUT 90 PERCENT OF THE CONTENTS OF THE OLD AGREEMENT," AND THAT ALTHOUGH THE GOM HAD SUGGESTED SOE OF ITS OWN CHANGES, "THERE IS NO BASIC DIFFERENCE" BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS. BOTH SIDES, ACCORDING TO SENI, AGREED THAT THE NEW SETUP WOULD INVOLVE THREE LEVELS OF DISCUSSION: PRIME MINISTERIAL, MINISTERIAL AND OFFICIAL (MALAYSIAN PRESS REPORTS HAVE DESCRIBED THE THIRD LEVEL AS "REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDERS"). ON THE SUBJECT OF "HOT PURSUIT" (ABOUT WHICH THE MALAYSIANS FEEL QUITE STRONGLY), SENI STATED THAT "THETHAIS WILL AGREE TO SOME FORM OF HOT PURSUIT, SUBJECT TO CERTAIN LIMITATIONS AND MUTUAL AGREEMENTS," INTO THE TERRITORY OF THE OTHER.

6. THAI UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ANAND PANYARACHUN, TOLD NEWSMAN JULY 25 THAT THE NEW GBA WAS ORIGINALLY DRAFTED BY THAILAND LAST FEBRUARY AND SUBMITTED TO MALAYSIA DURING FOREIGN MINISTER PICHAI RATTAKUL'S VISIT TO KUALA LUMPUR IN MAY. HE CONTENDED THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS HAD REMAINED CLOSE EVEN AFTER THE BETONG TROUBLES. THE RTG WAS FULLY COGNIZANT THAT THE WITHDRAWAL OF MALAYSIAN POLICE FIELD FORCE FROM BETONG IN EARLY JUNE WOULD CREATE A VACUUM, WHICH THE RTG INTENDED TO OFFSET BY MAKING ADDITIONAL BUDGETARY ALLOCATIONS. ON JULY 25 ANAND TOLD REPORTERS THAT FOLLOWUP NEGOTIATIONS ON THE NEW AGREEMENT WOULD CONTINUE EITHER AT MEETINGS IN BANGKOK OR KUALA LUMPUR OR THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.

7. COMMENT: OUR INITIAL REACTION ON BASIS OF PRESS ACCOUNTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IS THAT TALKS APPEAR TO HAVE GONE AS EXPECTED. MEETING GENERATED HELPFUL ATMOSPHERE OF GOODWILL, RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO LEADERS HAVE BEEN PERSONALIZED, AND DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN THEM LED TO WHAT IS REPORTED TO BE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON THE FRAMEWORK OF THE NEW BORDER ACCORD, WITH HAGGLING OVER DETAILS TO BE LEFT TO SUBORDINATES IN ENSUING NEGOTIATIONS. LOCAL PRESS TREATMENT HAS BEEN DECIDEDLY UPBEAT, RUNNING BOLD HEADLINES ON PM'S "BIG STEP FORWARD" THEME, "HEART TO HEART TALKS," ETC. FROM MALAYSIAN VIEW WHAT COUNTS IN FINAL ANALYSIS HOWEVER IS DEVISING A WORKABLE BORDER AGREEMENT EITHER FORMAL OR TACIT, THAT WILL GIVE GOM MAXIMUM FREEDOM IN BLOCKING MOVEMENTS OF COMMUNIST TERRORISTS FROM AND TO THEIR SANCTUARIES IN THAILAND.

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